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September 29, 2009

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"These grants will provide survivors of violence with better services to help them heal, and also help public and private groups in Louisiana collaborate more effectively to prevent violent crimes against women," said Rep. Melancon. "I will continue to support funding for grants like these that directly benefit our people and strengthen communities in south Louisiana."

The grants are funded through the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Coalitions Program, which supports organizations that provide intervention, advocacy and support services to sexual assault victims. The grants are administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women.

Rep. Melancon voted to provide annual funding for the Office on Violence Against Women through an appropriations bill passed earlier this year. The office works to reduce violence against women and strengthen services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Additional funding for one of the grants was made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as the Recovery Act, which Rep. Melancon also voted for in Congress.

"The grants allow for technical support and guidance to domestic violence services providers to make each home safe and free from violence," said Julie Pellegrin, president of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "The funds from these grants will provide, and continue to provide, sensitivity and cultural competency education and training and give resources to the LCADV member programs and to local and state organizations to help break down barriers."

"Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault is thrilled to once again receive this critical support for our work," said Judy Benitez, executive director of the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault. "These funds help with our core work of coordinating the activities of the community-based sexual assault crisis centers across the state of Louisiana, as well as collaborating with other local, state and federal entities involved in anti-violence against women activities."

The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV) and the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LaFASA) work to end violence against women by coordinating victim services and collaborating with other federal, state, and local entities to address violence issues. Nationwide, statewide sexual assault coalitions, such as LaFASA, provide support to rape crisis centers through financial support, training, technical assistance and public awareness. Statewide domestic violence coalitions like LCADV provide similar support to battered women's shelters and victim service programs.

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